



Balcones Forge Dispatch

President's Corner

April 2015



Greetings!

The other day after a morning babysitting session with my granddaughter, Ella, as the kids were leaving the older sister opened the front door and baby Ella ran for the outside world. We tried to stop her but she is just too fast. My daughter-in-

law then yelled "Ella stop" and the child froze and then looked back for further instructions.

This is exactly the kind of thing that saves lives and helps to avoid injury. If you see dangerous situations that need immediate attention yell "Stop" and point at that person. If you are outside and they cannot hear you, wave your arms or throw your cap or something to get their attention. If you are inside, a quick flip of the light switch should do the trick, even when they are wearing hearing protection. We should always be aware of our surroundings when working around others with power tools and be ready to stop immediately when we hear the word "stop" no matter what you are doing.

Thanks to all for another successful Bluebonnet Demo. This one was way over the top. I can say enough to thank all those who helped out. This was our best demo to date.

If you didn't get a chance to fill out one of the surveys it's not too late to send us your comments and feedback. This is the info we need to plan future events and make things better.

Hope to see everybody at the Helm shop this Saturday.

Jerry Achterberg
President Balcones Forge



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March 28 & 29 was the Bluebonnet Forge Demonstration by master blacksmith Dorothy Stiegler hosted by Balcones Forge. Dorothy hot forged many beautiful flowers from silicon bronze which is 96% copper and 4% bronze. A gift from God is what Dorothy contributes to her 40 year success in the business. The silicon bronze is an expensive medium but she points out that it is durable and needs no maintenance. Her projects have no welding, only rivets. A slideshow revealed magnificent staircases, fences, and astounding doors that she had completed for some very high end customers. She is a current member of the California Blacksmith Association as well as ABANA and has received numerous awards including the Alex Bealer Award in 1998. Whitaker, Turley, and Paley are only a few of the blacksmiths she has studied under and is quick to point out that a successful blacksmith not only looks at their own work, but admires it. Dorothy also demonstrated her ability to verbalize the forging concepts to the very large crowd and I (for one) was particularly impressed with her unique ability to forge elegant pieces and she commented that hammer marks (not dings) add to the beauty of a blacksmith's work. By moving the piece on the anvil with your left hand and striking on the same place on the anvil with the hammer, is something Dorothy emphasized to the group about enhancing ones ability to forge. Interestingly, Dorothy mentioned that she



Dorothy Stiegler at the 2015 Bluebonnet Demo and Workshop.

photo by Harry Cabluck

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has moved probably 50 tons of bronze over the years and that one of her basic blacksmith rules is to perfectly balance one's work. Also, she demonstrated proper use of the hammer and emphasized that the proper technique totally matters for everyone.

Prior to the Saturday and Sunday demo, Dorothy held a hands-on workshop through the week of which 40 blacksmiths from Balcones Forge attended. There were 10 anvil workstations carefully arranged under the auspices of Jim Elliot and John Crouchet. Dorothy's project for the group was a silicon bronze hummingbird attending to gathering nectar from a two different shaped cala lillies also of bronze. Needless to point out that nature seldom submits identical flowers and the same is true for 40 blacksmiths, but it was delightful to receive praise from Dorothy for our efforts. It's not very often that one gets to work in an environment where you feel you can't do anything wrong.

Another unique experience was the German style striking she and Shane Tilton demonstrated. Because differences in language can present a problem, the primary forger rings the anvil before the striker swings a blow and the forging process is stopped once the primary forger rings the anvil again. The rhythmic sound produced by the pair was an awesome sound and Dorothy pointed out that this is a surer way to avoid injury by a hammer hitting hammer accidentally.

The demonstration was interrupted for a very special recognition to Jerry Whitley and Rudy Billings who were presented lifetime membership awards from Balcones Forge by president Jerry Achterberg. Also recognized for their work in meal preparation was Dave & Elise Guerrero and Cheryl Craig. Acknowledgement and appreciation was expressed to John & Carolyn Crochet for the wonderful Texas hospitality, not to mention just plain nice folks.

A solemn moment was then taken to remember the recent death of Jane Honig, the wife of James Honig, one of Balcones Forge distinguished and talented blacksmiths. A prayer was said by Jerry

Whitley followed by very kind and heartfelt comments from Dorothy. The ringing of the anvil commenced with members of the board followed by the entire group.

The Saturday evening BBQ was followed by one of the most popular silent and live auction of items donated by Balcones members. Whispers of not having some of the more generous bidders was quickly discredited as auctioneer Vince Herod began the auction. After co-treasurers Daniel Harrington & Rudy Billings tallied up the proceeds they reported that this was the most profitable auction to date!

This wonderful event concluded Sunday afternoon and Jerry Achterberg expressed that a major component of the success of Balcones Forge is the hard work demonstrated not only in setting up for the event, but also the same enthusiasm by the group of individuals that assist each other in cleaning up after the event.

Reviews of the surveys filled out by members regarding future blacksmithing events as well as learning new techniques is under review and results will be announced at a later date.

Tim Tellander, Secretary
Balcones Forge



James Honig and Dorothy Stiegler
photo by Harry Cabluck

A GREAT DEAL

Balcones Forge has Mark Aspery Books!

All 3 volumes:

- I - Basic Blacksmithing
- II - Leafwork
- III - Joinery

\$50 each -- no tax, no shipping, normal price \$59

Send your requests to Rudy@BalconesForge.org

FUTURE BALCONES FORGE MEETINGS

April 25, 2015: James Helm

May 16, 2015- Swing Music Fest
San Marcos, TX

THE BALCONES FORGE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jerry Achterberg, President
Jerry Whitley, Vice President
Rudy Billings, Treasurer
Tim Tellander, Secretary

John Crouchet
Daniel Harrington, Librarian & Co-Treasurer
Jim Elliot
Vince Herod, Editor
Alan Lee
Jeff Lee

TRADE ITEM

Our "Trade Item" for the April 25 meeting will be something from a 12 inch length of 1/2 inch square bar stock. This is an opportunity to use your imagination and show us what you can do.

You gotta make one to take one!

MEMBER'S SURVEY

Please take the time to fill out the survey on the next page. The leaders of the group rely on the input of members to keep the organization moving in the desired direction of the members.

You can return the survey to any member of the Balcones Board; just come to the next meeting!

LOST AND FOUND

Somebody left a pair of red ladies prescription eyeglasses in my shop. If you are missing yours, get in touch with me and I will mail them to you.

Someone left a navy folding chair. Thanks. I looks like it is just my size!

John Crouchet

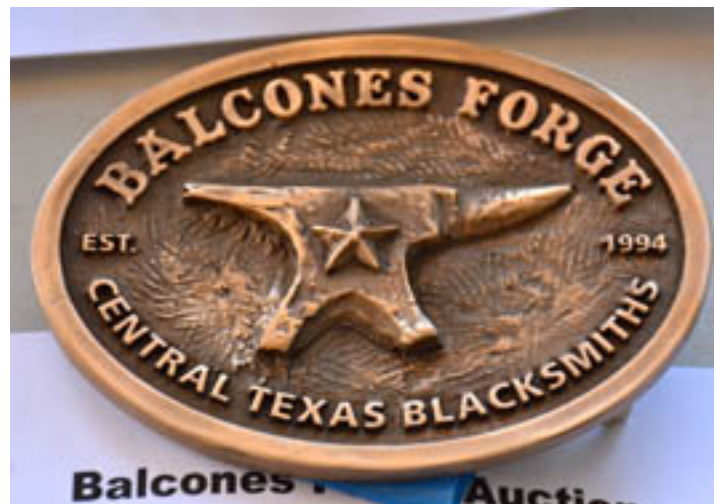


photo by Gerald Pollard



Balcones Forge Member Survey

The Balcones Forge Board, along with many wonderful volunteers, strive to make our organization the best possible, meeting our mission and the expectations of our members. With that in mind, the Board needs your assistance. Please take a few minutes to provide your input.

Thank you.

What was your favorite Balcones Forge meeting and why? _____

Would you be interested in having more hands-on workshops where we build something —like tongs or fireplace tools, etc.? _____ If we have such a meeting, would you come? _____ Suggestions? _____

Who do you think should be the next Bluebonnet Demonstrator? _____

Have you seen this person demonstrate? _____ What do they do? _____

Do you think that Balcones Forge charges too much for the Bluebonnet Demo? _____ What other ways could we make money if we were to let everyone into the Demo for free? _____

Would you like to see regular instructional classes for beginners held at Zilker Park? _____ Would you come? _____

Are you getting tired of those old farts running this organization? Name three people you think could take over and bring this club into the twenty-first century. _____

How many friends have you brought to Balcones meetings? _____

Where should we have our meetings? _____

Would you be willing to host a meeting? _____ If yes, name/phone _____

What type monthly demonstrations would you like to see? Blacksmith – bladesmith – other _____

Would you be willing to demo? _____ If yes, name/phone _____ What would you demo? _____

What "Trade Items" would you like to see? _____

Regarding trade items, how can we get more participation? _____

Where is Balcones Forge falling short in service to the members / public? _____

Suggestions/Comments: _____



The newest Lifetime Members of Balcones Forge

Rudy Billings and Jerry Whitley

photo by Harry Cabluck

MORE THAN WORDS...

It is such an honor and privilege to be inducted into the elite group of Balcones Forge Lifetime Members. Thank you! To be associated with the likes of Mr. Charlie (Stolte) and William Bastas, or Harvey Wise and Jerry Achterberg, is an outstanding feeling. As I said in my acceptance rambling, this whole group is very special. I've never seen any association work together so effortlessly and efficiently. When the call goes out for volunteers, no matter what the need, folks show up early and stay late. Simply amazing! And a lot of fun goes along with our efforts.

If you have been watching from the sidelines, I encourage you to get involved in some way. The reward is... well, very rewarding! Ask any officer or board member how you can be part of the experience. And again, thank you for the privilege of being a part of this great group.

Rudy

PS. FYI -- the other Lifetime Members: George and Cheryl Craig, John Crouchet, Jim Elliott, Neil Hastings, Vince Herod, Jerry Whitley, Harvey Wise, William Bastas and the late Charles Stolte.

"There's only one reason a blacksmith won't tell you something -- it's because he or she is about to show you." -- RLB



photo by Gerlad Pollard

photos by Vince Herod

Owen Creteau- January MABA Demonstration on End Details

Notes and Photos by Steven Spoerre

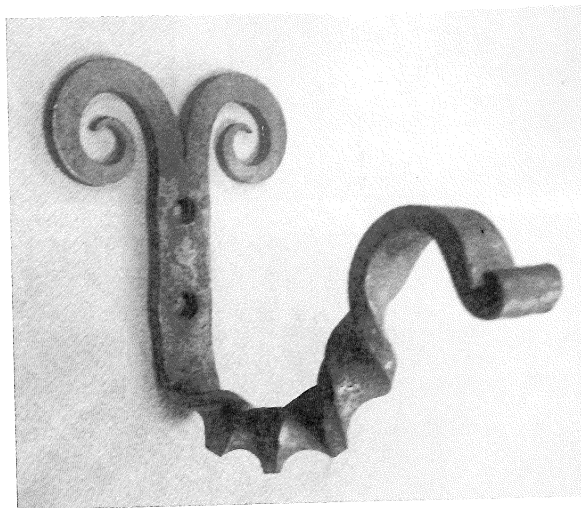
Owen showed the 50+ MABA members in attendance eight different end details by making four hooks – one treatment on each end. All the ends were familiar and use basic forging techniques to create. What kept the people watching the demonstration captivated was watching Owen move quickly and easily around the anvil, using its different areas and surfaces, and a hardie mounted bending fork, to efficiently shape each one of the details. This was one of those demonstrations where the write-up is only going to describe the basic mechanical steps - you really had to be there and see it, to get the most out of it. While watching Owen create each end, everyone saw how he used the anvil, hammer and tools, then they could take that back to their own shop to try the next time at their anvil. After the 8 end details were done, Owen also showed how to make 2 different handle ends, which will be covered in an upcoming newsletter.



Ball End - 3/8 by 3/4 inch flat stock was used: A mass of material was isolated at the end of the bar as a taper was crated over a radiused edge of the anvil. Using several heats and the face, near and far edges of the anvil- the end was upset and formed into a rough cube shape. Note that the material will probably fold back onto itself creating a cold shut, but because of the small size and lack of stress, it's ok.

Forging the cube into a faceted ball, then refining it to a sphere finishes the hook end.

Heart End - The end of the bar is split down the middle from both sides until the cut breaks through. The two pieces are spread apart so the two legs can be forged. After the beveled chisel edge is forged from the inside edge and a taper is refined on one side, the other side is worked. The ends are wrapped about three quarters of the way around one of the tines of a bending fork mounted in the anvil, arched towards each other. Be sure to protect the face of your anvil with a cut plate while you chisel.



Fish Tail - 3/8 by 3/4 inch flat stock was used: Several inches of the bar end were heated then one of the wide faces was laid on the anvil. The top and bottom of the bar were tapered while letting the sides spread as the material was made thinner. If the fishtail is used for a hook, you don't want the outer corners to be too sharp or too wide, to avoid snagging anything when the hook is used. After the material is spread, tightly roll the end over the far edge of the anvil, flip it and pull the material towards the bar with glancing hammer blows until the roll is complete.

Rams Horn - a long taper was drawn on the end of the bar and centered. The taper is split down the middle from both sides until it is broke through. The two pieces are spread apart and one is bent out of the way so the other can be forged. After the chiseled edge is removed and the taper is refined it is bent out of the way and the other piece is worked. The two "horns" were straightened and adjusted to be the same length. The hardie mounted bending forks were used to hold the bar during the initial outward bends of the horns, then while keeping both side evenly shaped, the horns were scrolled.



Flame End - 1/2 inch round stock was used: a short point is drawn on one end (square - octagon - round), placing the short point half on and half off the anvil, it's flattened into a spearhead shape. The point is knocked over by placing the end between the tines of the bending fork and hitting it with the hammer, then refining it at the horn of the anvil.

Tapered Round (Rat Tail) - square - octagon - round (SOR): Once the end is round, start turning the point over the far edge of the anvil. As the piece is struck, it's moved out farther so a curl is pushed down towards the anvil side. Move the curl to the face of the anvil pointing upward, and with glancing blows pull the point around toward the taper. Keep the point aligned with the center line, if it moves out to either side there's a good chance that when the hook is used something will get snagged on it. Develop the round shape by moving the finial to an area on the anvil that will back the piece while it's struck.

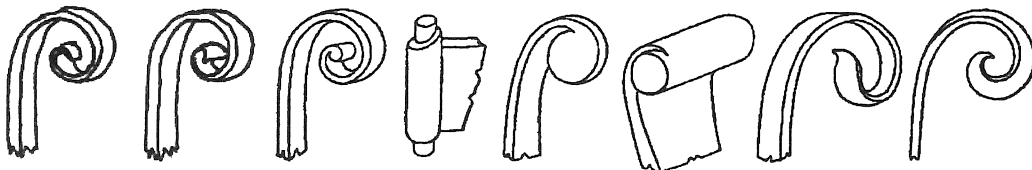


Square Tapered - 1/2 inch square stock was used: The end was tapered to a thin, rectangular shape. The point is started by turning the point over the far edge of the anvil. As the piece is struck, it's moved out farther so a curl is pushed down towards the anvil side. Move the curl to the face of the anvil pointing upward, and with glancing blows pull the point around toward the taper. Keep the point aligned with the hook's center line.

Penny End - Knock the edges in on all 4 sides. Place about 3/8" of the bar end on the face of the anvil and using half face blows drive the end down about 2/3 of the thickness. As the end spreads refine it into a round shape.

CoSIRA Books, a series of books produced in England by the Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas, can be downloaded now from the Herefordshire College of Technology website at www.hct.ac.uk in a PDF format. Type in the word "wrought" (without the quotation marks) in the search box and several books come up.

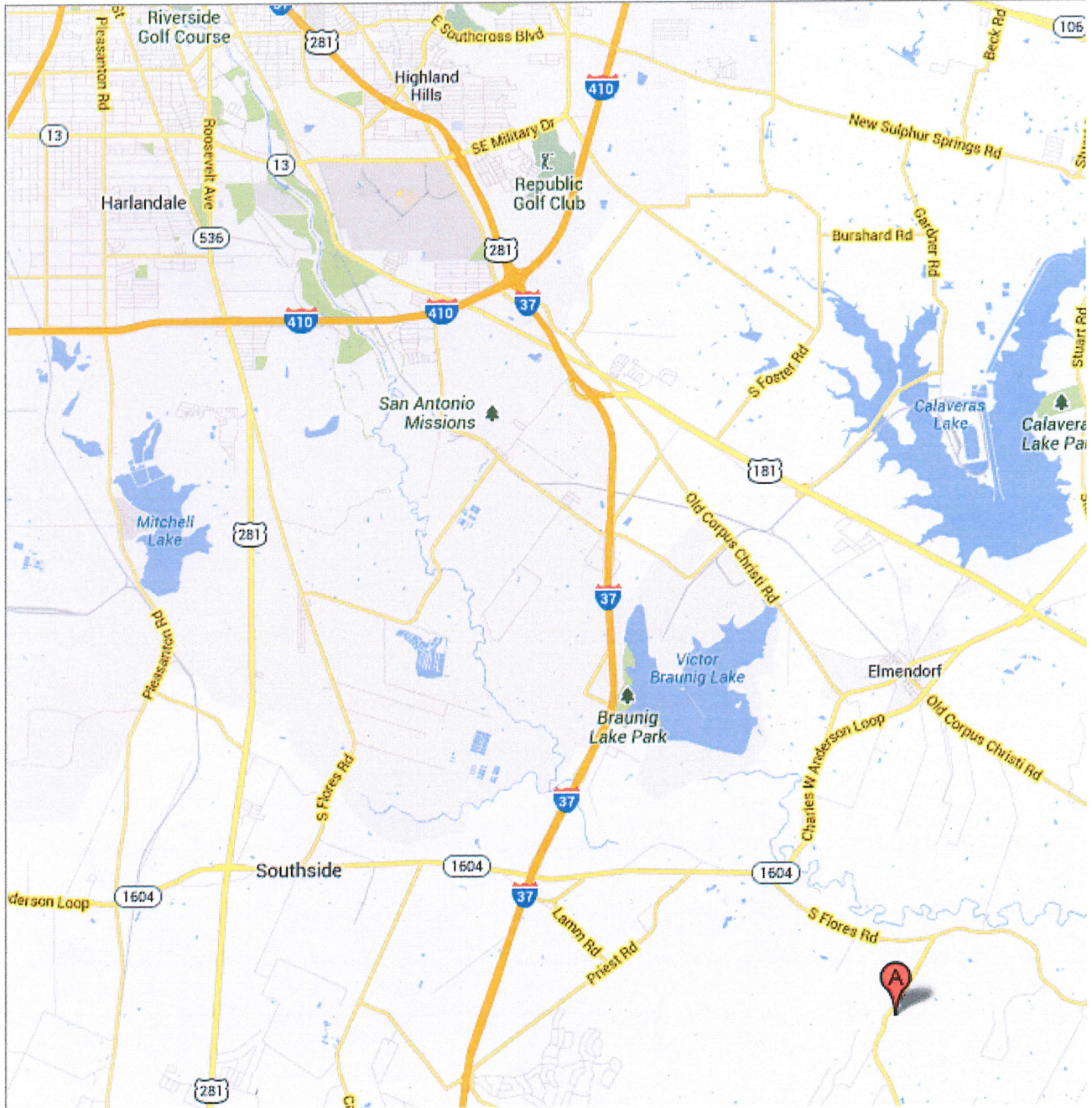
WROUGHT IRONWORK: A Manual of Instruction for Craftsmen, contains detailed instructions, sketches and pictures for making these 8 scrolls (ribbon, fishtail, solid snub, fishtail snub, half-penny, bolt end, blow-over leaf, and bevelled), as well as, scroll tongs & tooling and other forge projects. The book is broken down into 6 small files for quick download.



The April 25 meeting of Balcones Forge will be at the shop of James Helm. Start time is 9:30am.

James Helm
7458 FM 2579 Unit B
Floresville, TX 78114

Coming south from San Antonio on I-37, you exit on 1604 and head east, toward Elmendorf. After 3 miles, turn right onto FM 1303 and drive 2 1/2 miles. There will be a white convenience store on the left and a bar called The Outhouse on the right where FM 2579 intersects with 1303. Turn right onto 2579, and drive one mile. The entrance will be the first one on the left, and the shop is the tin building on the left.



Map for April Meeting

Directions on the previous page of this issue



Hummingbird in progress. As taught at the Blubonnet Demo.

photo by Gerald Pollard

Vincent Herod
Spotted Dog Forge
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Paige, TX 78659-4922

